End of the World Project

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COLLABORATION MEETING

NEZ PERCE – CLEARWATER NATIONAL FORESTS
SALMON RIVER DISTRICT
Grangeville, ID - October 4, 2017

AGENDA

6:00 - 6:15 Introductions and Meeting Objectives

6:15 - 6:25 Summary of Agriculture Act (Farm Bill) of 2014/Environmental Assessment Process

6:25 - 6:45 Introduction of the End of the World Project Area

6:45 - 7:15 Process for Identifying Potential Treatment Areas

7:15 - 8:00 Feedback on Potential Treatment Areas and Collaborative Process

OBJECTIVES OF COLLABORATION

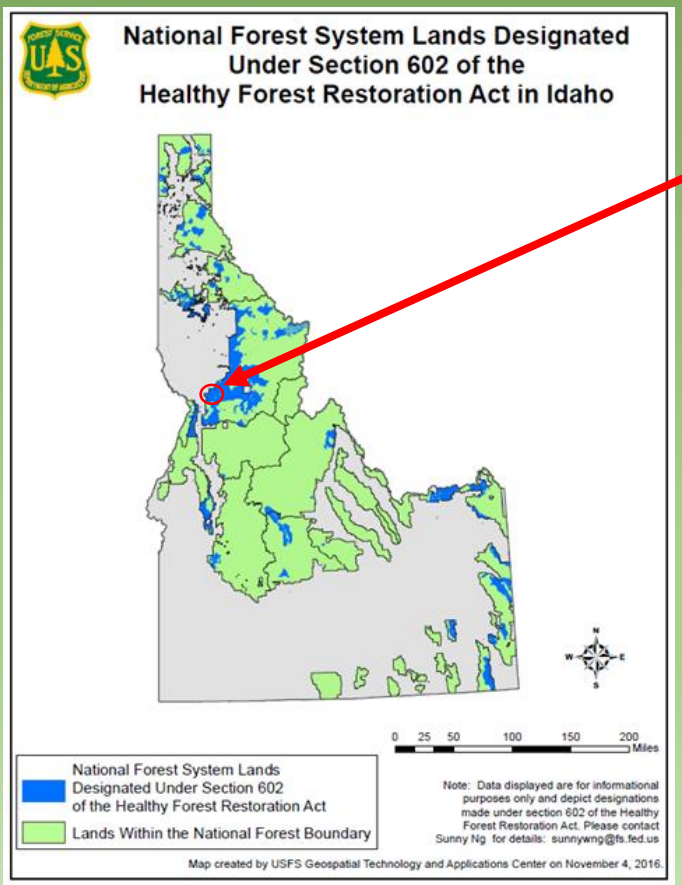
- Forest Service gains a better understanding of who wants to participate in the collaborative process to develop and implement this project

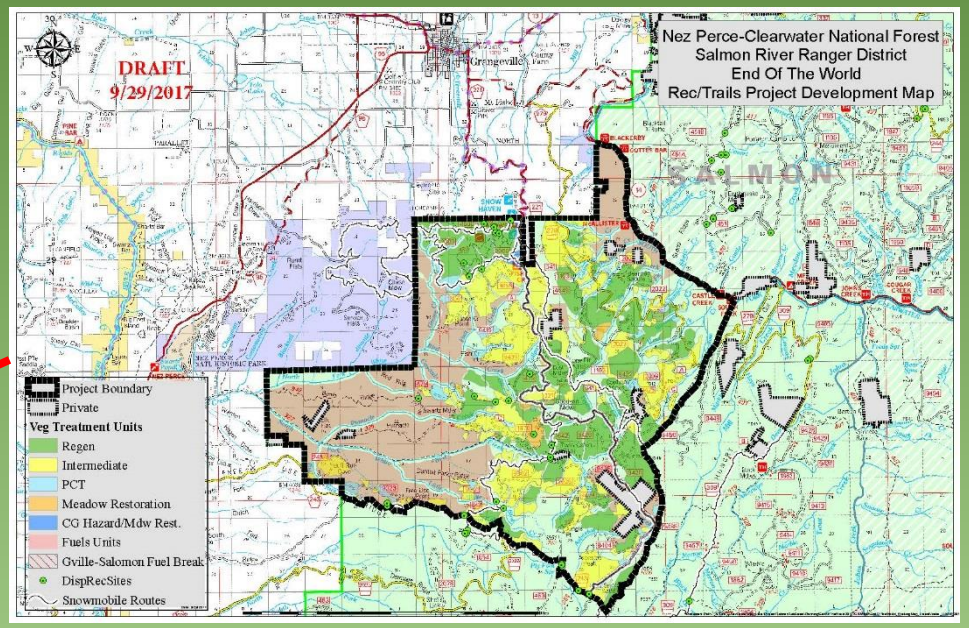
- The Public gains a better understanding of the project area and restoration needs, and how you can engage to collaboratively develop and implement the project

- The Interdisciplinary Team and Responsible Official gain feedback on potential treatment opportunities and types

PROJECT AREA OVERVIEW

- Approximately 49,565 acres



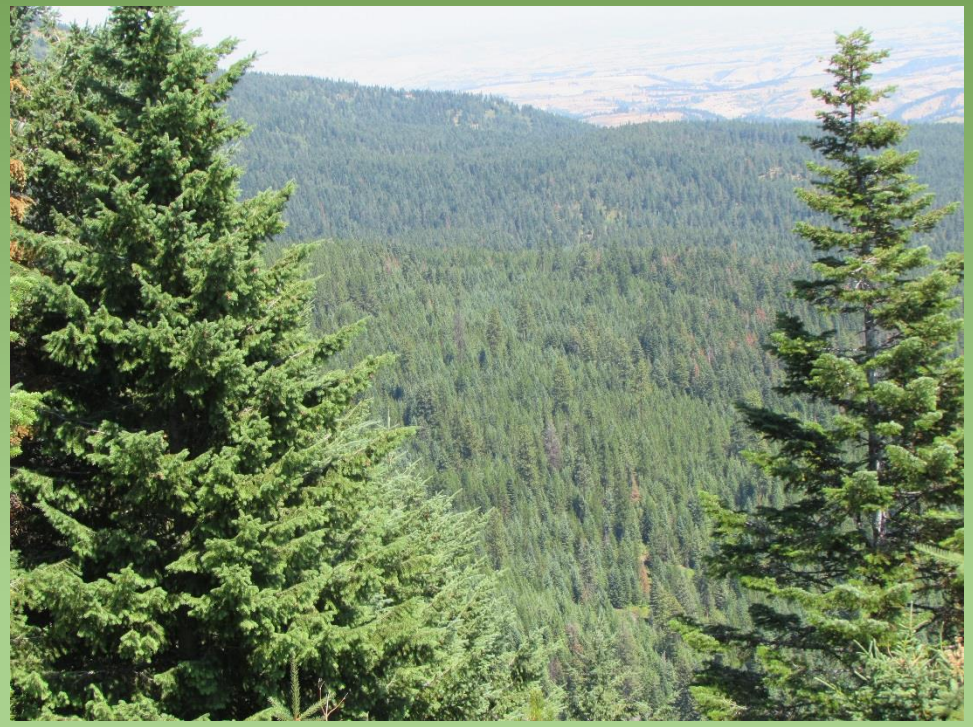


- Designated as part of a national insect and disease treatment area by the Governor of Idaho under the 2014 Farm Bill / Healthy Forest Restoration Act

2014 AGRICULTURAL ACT (FARM BILL)

Section 8204, Insect and Disease Infestation

- Amends Title VI of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003
- Allowed Governors to request lands be designated as part of a national insect and disease treatment program
- Created new EA and EIS alternative requirements & expedited review process



DESIGNATION OF INSECT AND DISEASE TREATMENT AREAS

To be designated as part of the insect and disease treatment program, an area must meet <u>at least one</u> of the following criteria:

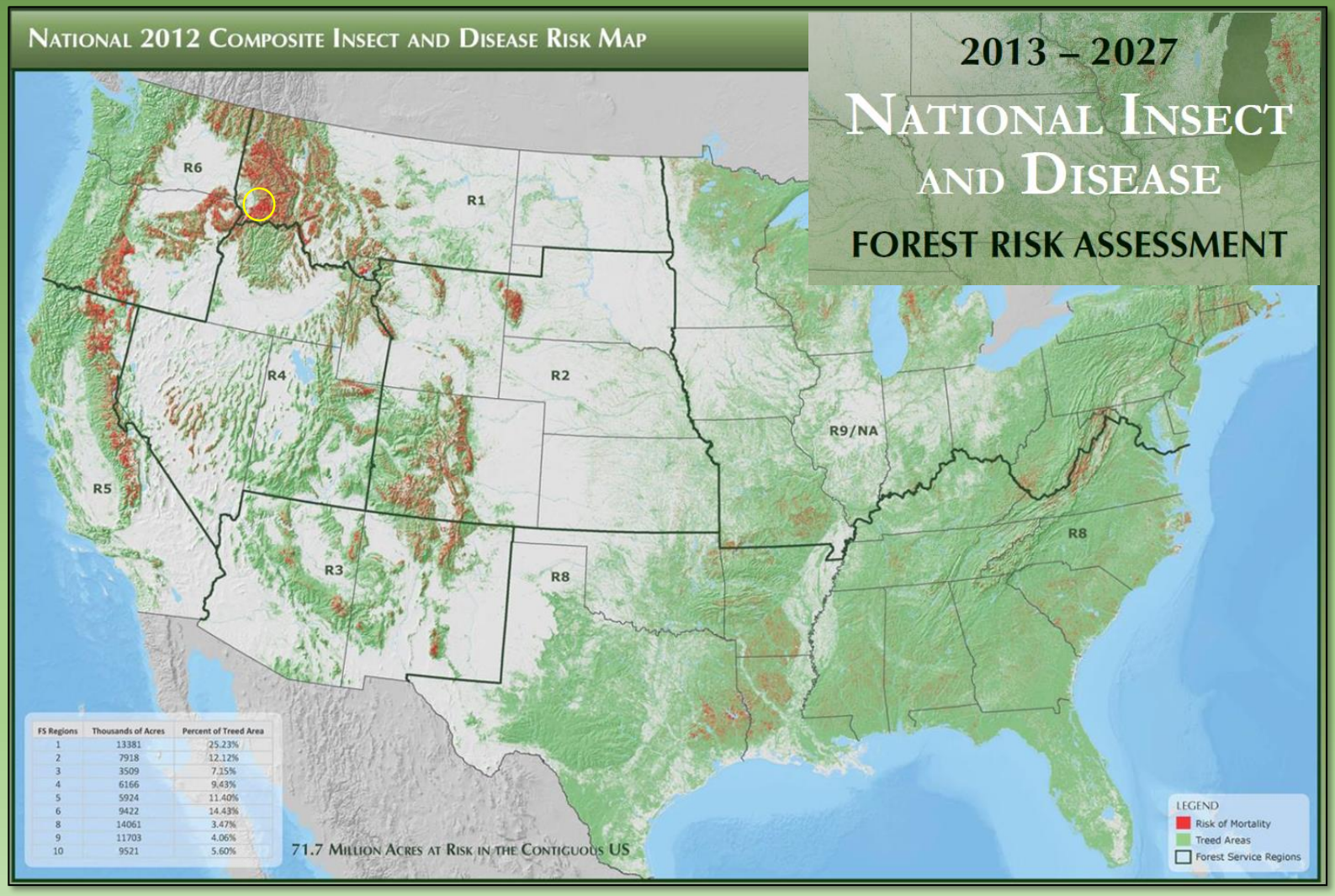
- Be experiencing forest health decline based on annual forest health surveys;
- **Be at risk of experiencing substantially increased tree mortality on the most recent Forest Health Protection Insect and Disease Risk Map**;

Or

- Contain hazard trees that pose an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health, or safety

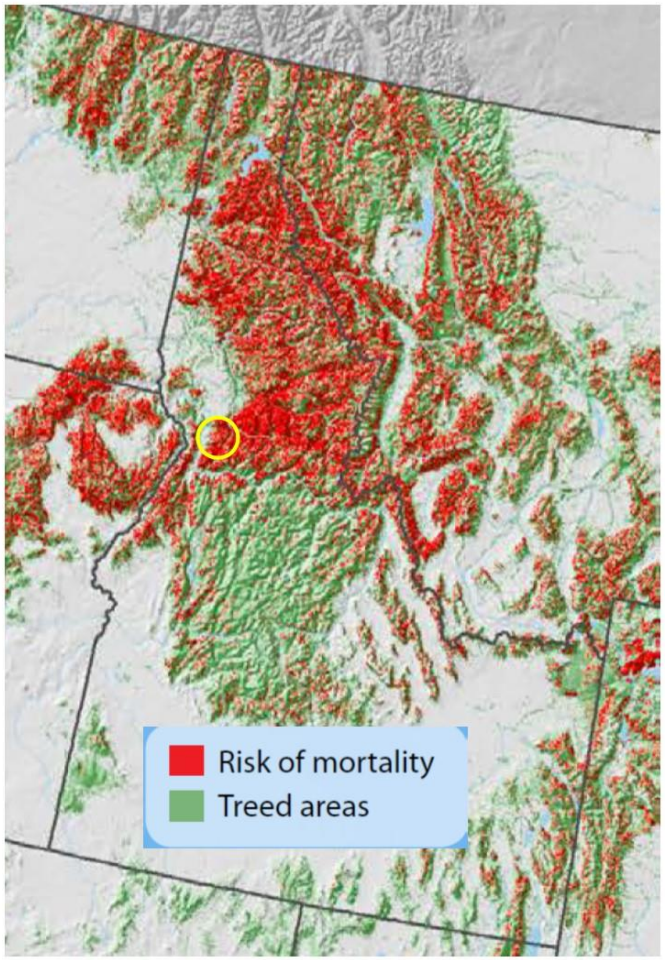
The End of the World project area has been determined to meet one or more of these criteria

DESIGNATION OF INSECT AND DISEASE TREATMENT AREAS

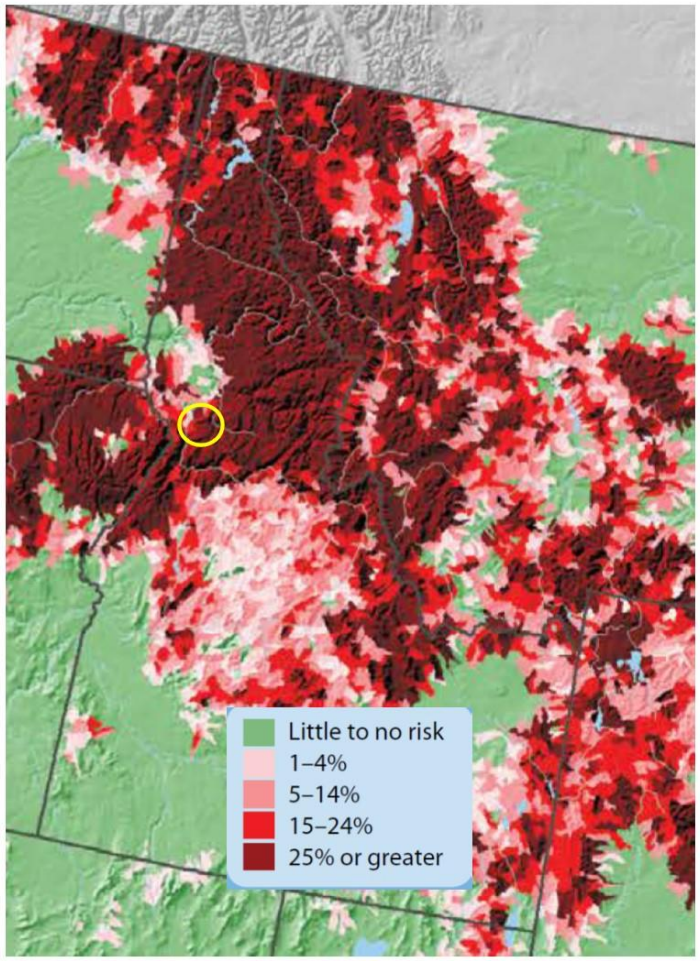


DESIGNATION OF INSECT AND DISEASE TREATMENT AREAS

Risk, or more appropriately termed *hazard*, is defined as: ***the expectation that, without remediation, at least 25% of standing live basal area greater than one inch in diameter will die over a 15-year time frame (2013 to 2027) due to insects and diseases.*** (Executive Summary: 2013-2027 National Insect and Disease Forest Risk Assessment)



NATIONAL 2012 COMPOSITE INSECT AND DISEASE RISK MAP



PERCENTAGE OF TREED AREA AT RISK BY WATERSHED

INSECT AND DISEASE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The End of the World project will be consistent with the Healthy Forests Restoration Act Section 602(d)because it:

- Falls within a rural wildland urban interface (WUI) area and is located less than 1 ½ miles from the boundary of a designated at risk community (Grangeville);
- Is not a component of the National Wilderness System or designated wilderness study area;
- Does not include any federal land on which the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited; and
- Would be consistent with the Nez Perce National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

INSECT AND DISEASE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The End of the World project will carry out forest restoration treatments that:

- Maximize the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease;
- Consider the best available scientific information to maintain or restore the ecological integrity, including maintaining or restoring structure, function, composition, and connectivity; and
- Will be developed and implemented through a collaborative process that includes multiple interested persons representing diverse interests; and is transparent and nonexclusive;

INSECT AND DISEASE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Potential Vegetation Management Opportunities

- Thin or regenerate stands with a high insect or disease risk.
- Thin and/or underburn on dry habitat types to maintain single story ponderosa pine, Larch, or Douglas-fir.
- Thin, shelterwood, or burn on mesic habitat types to maintain pine or larch, in two story stands.
- Salvage dead and dying trees to reduce excess fuels and contribute to local economy.
- Thin (precommercial size or commercial wherever feasible) previously treated areas to allow development of desirable forest characteristics.
- Thin and underburn ridgetop areas to a canopy spacing (shaded fuel breaks) to reduce fuels, facilitate fire suppression, and provide protection for wildland fire use and/or old growth stands.
- Restore meadows.
- Support other owners in restoration activities.

INSECT AND DISEASE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Potential Watershed Opportunities

- Drainage improvement on existing permanent roads and trails to include upgrading and right sizing existing culverts.
- Stabilization, hazard tree reduction, and restoration work on existing permanent roads and trails.
- Decommission existing non-system roads and trails that are not currently stabilized.
- Meadow restoration and riparian fencing.

ANTICIPATED COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

What are the objectives of the collaborative process?

- Focused, results-oriented process
- Transparent, non-exclusive, and includes multiple interested parties representing diverse interests
- Open and respectful sharing by participants
  - Give options and reasons for the Responsible Official to consider when developing the project and making the decision
- Responsible Official equitably values insights from each participating individual and organization
  - Will not rely solely on any single individual or group perspective
  - Is not seeking consensus decision or recommendation

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS ROLES

What is the role of participants in the collaborative process?

- Provide input for the Responsible Official to consider regarding development of the purpose and need, and the proposed action
  - Help define the treatment areas and types, design features and potential mitigation measures, etc., as informed by local knowledge and experience, and incorporation of the best available science
- Provide the rationale and reasoning behind suggestions or options presented

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS & DECISION SPACE

What constrains and guides the decision space throughout the collaborative process?

- The project ***must be in compliance with all laws, regulations, and policies,*** to include the Forest Plan
  - Applicable laws, regulations, and policies will be discussed and considered during project development
  - Forest Interdisciplinary Team members can provide clarification on the feasibility of suggestions and options presented, relative to laws, regulations and policies

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Subject to change based on needs and issues that arise

- Preliminary Proposed Action Development: July 2017 – January 2018
- Public Collaboration Meeting/Field Trip: October 2017
- Scoping / Public Comment- January 1 through February 1, 2018
- Identify Issues/Refine Proposed Action/ Conduct Effects Analysis - February 1 through September 30, 2018
- Environmental Assessment / Draft FONSI – October 1, 2018
- Objection / Objection Review – October 1 to November 30, 2018
- Sign Decision – January 15, 2019

EXISTING VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Forest Structure: Young Trees

- Young forest (trees 1-15 inches diameter) make up 25% of the project area.
- Past timber harvest from 1940 through 2016 totaled 26,705 acres.
- 35% of the project area was harvested using “regeneration” harvest methods.
- This has resulted in many young stands and plantations that would benefit from pre-commercial or commercial thinning.

Plantation that needs pre-commercial thinning.

Plantation that needs commercial thinning.

Plantation after commercial thinning. (Adams Stewardship)

EXISTING VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Forest Structure: Middle Aged Trees

- Middle aged forest (trees 15-20 inches diameter) comprise **50% of the project area.**
- Fire exclusion in the past ~90 years has created mixed-conifer forests that are unnaturally dense.
- Tree species in the project area:
  - **55% mixed-conifer** (grand-fir, spruce, Douglas-fir)
  - **27% pine/larch**
- Historically would have seen much higher amounts of pine/larch.
- Higher amounts of mixed-conifer forest leads to higher susceptibility to drought, fire, and insect/disease.

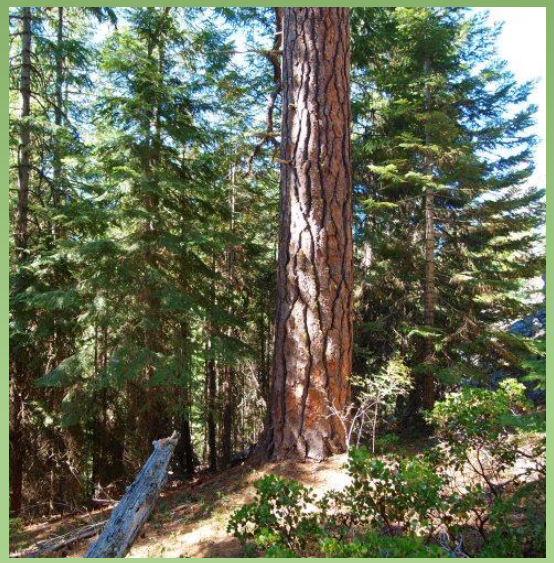
Mixed conifer stand in need of maintenance/restoration through timber harvest.

EXISTING VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Forest Structure: Old Trees

- Mature forest (trees 20 inches or larger diameter) comprise 10% of the project area.
- Large healthy trees would be retained during timber harvest.

Legacy ponderosa pine trees.



EXISTING VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Insect Activity

- Bark beetles have been observed in incidental amounts:
  - Mountain pine beetle in lodgepole pine
  - Fir engraver beetle in Douglas-fir and grand fir
  - Douglas-fir bark beetle

- Bark beetles cause tree stress, decline, and mortality.
- Bark beetle mortality results in timber volume loss and buildups of dangerous fuel loading.
- Existing high tree densities contribute to bark beetle attacks.
- Current insect outbreaks are present but minor in the project area.
- Timber harvest would help maintain healthy stands.

Bark beetle mortality.

EXISTING VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Tree Diseases

- With management (timber harvest) many diseases can be controlled.
- Continued forest health can be promoted.

Dwarf mistletoe in western larch.

- Tree diseases observed:
  - Dwarf mistletoe in Douglas-fir and western larch
  - Indian paint fungus in grand fir
  - Needle cast in ponderosa pine
  - Armillaria root disease in Douglas-fir and grand fir
  - Western gall rust in lodgepole pine

Gall rust in lodgepole pine.

Indian paint fungus in grand fir.

EXISTING VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Hazardous Fuels

- Mixed-conifer/mixed-aged stands create ladder fuels that can cause crown fires.
- Insect and disease mortality is contributing to fuel loading.
- Treatments around private property would focus on fuels & defensible space.

Ladder fuels and fuel loading in a ponderosa pine stand.

Post-harvest fire resistant stand.

EXISTING VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Hazardous Fuels Cont.

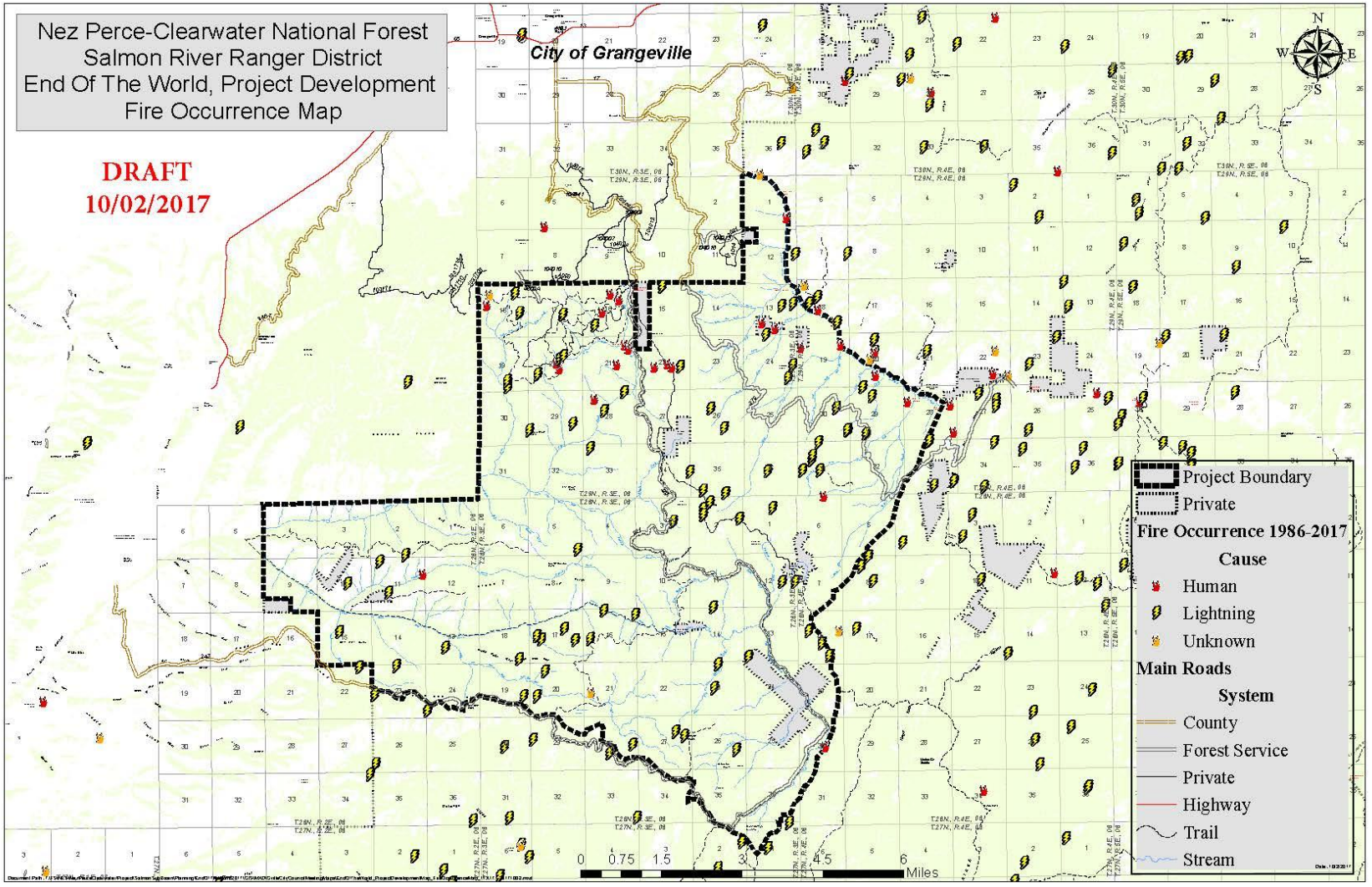
- Treatments along roadways would focus on safe firefighter access and defensibility.

Shaded Fuel Break on 221 Road:
Completed 2017 during Hanover Fire

Shaded Fuel Break on 444 Road:
Completed 2017 during Hanover Fire

EXISTING VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Past Fire Occurrence



EXISTING HYDROLOGY CONDITIONS

STREAMS

- A TMDL (total maximum daily load) for temperature and sediment has been established for waterways in the South Fork Clearwater River. Project design would support TMDL implementation.
- White Bird drainage streams are meeting their beneficial uses
- All streams are well vegetated and will have, a minimum 150 feet buffer (300 feet on fish bearing streams)

EXISTING HYDROLOGY CONDITIONS

ROADS

- Primary Forest Service roads are in good condition
- Secondary roads would be improved as required to implement project activities
- Preliminary treatment proposals indicate approximately 8.7 miles of new temporary roads will be needed
- All temporary roads would be decommissioned within three years of project completion

WILDLIFE AND FISH SPECIES

Fish and Aquatic Species

- Threatened: spring Chinook salmon(Salmon River), Snake River steelhead, and bull trout
- Region 1 Sensitive Species: westslope cutthroat trout, redband trout, spring Chinook salmon (Clearwater River drainage only), Pacific lamprey, and pearlshell mussels

Sensitive Species (not a complete list)

- Mountain quail, black-backed woodpecker, flammulated owl, Westslope cutthroat trout, fisher, and several other species are present or have potential habitat within the project area

Management Indicator Species

- Marten, northern goshawk, pileated woodpecker, elk, Shiras moose, and big horn sheep are present or have potential habitat within the project area

PRELIMINARY PURPOSE AND NEED

Based on observed existing conditions, the preliminary purpose and need for the End of the World Project are to:

- Reduce the risk or extent of, or increase resilience to, insect or disease infestation;

- Reduce wildfire risk to the local communities and surrounding federal lands;

- Restore forest vegetation, meadows, and grasslands to a healthy condition;

- Improve water quality and aquatic habitats.

PRELIMINARY TREATMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Identifying areas feasible for treatment

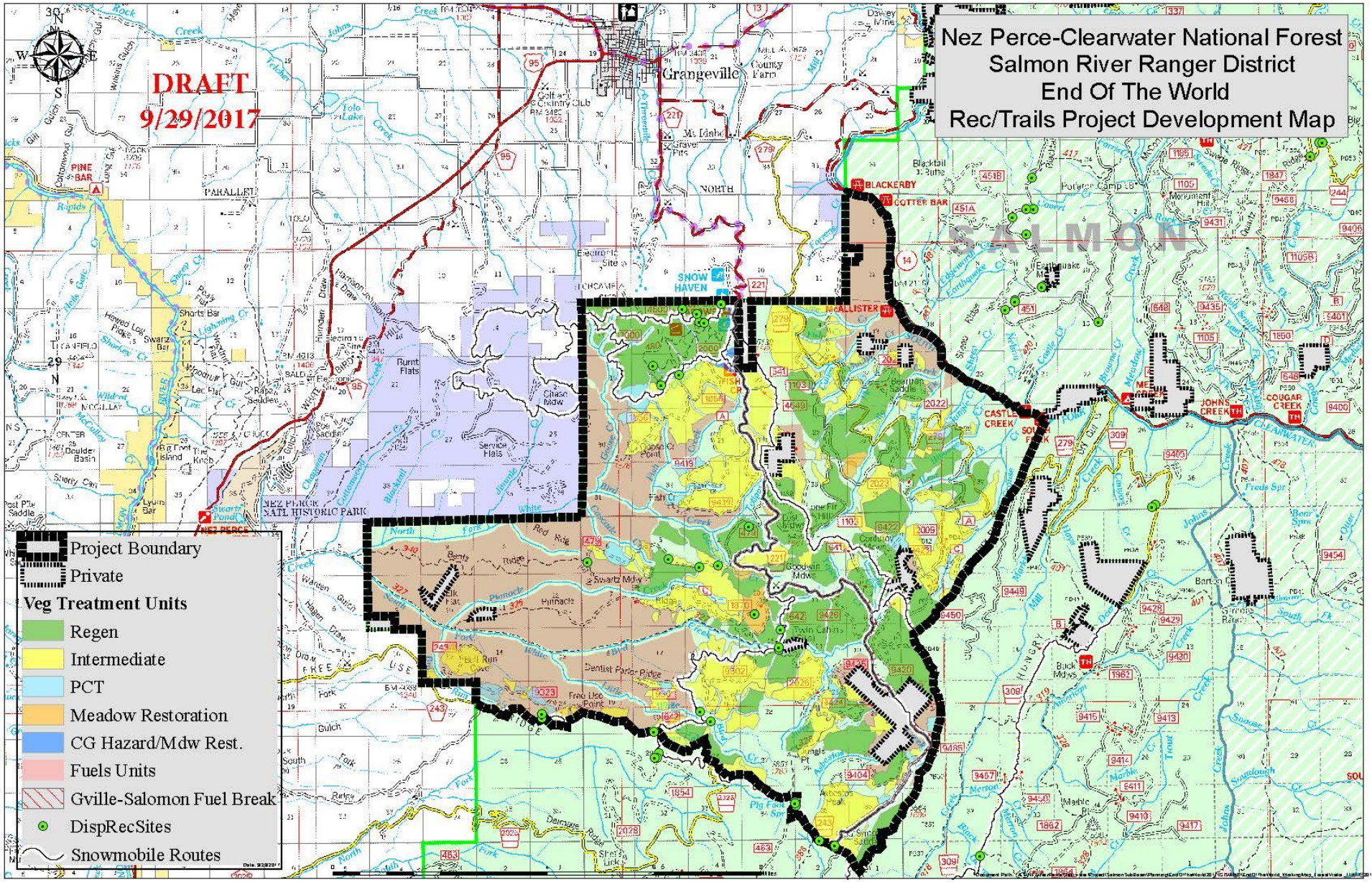
- Forest Plan Management Areas
  - Areas defined as suitable for vegetation management
- Topography
  - Ground-based (tractor and tractor/jammer) where possible
  - Cable in other areas
- Streams: Minimum 150 foot buffer around streams (300 foot buffer for fish bearing)
- Roads
  - Visual barriers on major roads
  - Proposed intermediate harvest on popular vista roads and trails

PRELIMINARY TREATMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Things that could change the potential treatment areas or types:

- Findings during team assessment that identify areas in need of buffer or exclusion
  - Wildlife, rare plants, heritage sites, etc.
  - Ability of areas to meet Forest Plan Standards such as big game habitat, soil disturbance, etc.

- Feedback from landowners and interested parties
  - Design features or mitigation measures for activities that could be included in the proposed action


Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest
Salmon River Ranger District
End Of The World
Rec/Trails Project Development Map
DRAFT
9/29/2017
Project Boundary
Private
Veg Treatment Units
Regen
Intermediate
PCT
Meadow Restoration
CG Hazard/Mdw Rest.
Fuels Units
Gville-Salomon Fuel Break
DispRecSites
Snowmobile Routes
Grangeville
BLACKERBY
COTTER BAR
McALLISTER
SNOW HAVEN
PINE BAR
PARALLEL
NORTH
SALMON